

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BONN 17160 282306Z

72

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8956

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 17160

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW, VN

SUBJECT: WEST GERMAN RELATIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAM

REF: BONN 10297

1. DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH EAST ASIA IN FONOFF, BERENDONCK, TELLS US THAT WEST GERMAN AND NORTH VIETNAMESE REPS HAVE MET IN PARIS TO DISCUSS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES BUT THAT, BEYOND A CLARIFICATION OF PRESENTLY INCOMPATIBLE POSITIONS, NO REAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE. BERLIN IS MAIN ISSUE. FRG WANTS TO REACH AGREEMENT ON ITS RIGHT TO
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PAGE 02 BONN 17160 282306Z

REPRESENT WEST BERLIN IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN ADVANCE OF

ESTABLISHING RELATIONS. VIETNAMESE SAY THEY ARE UNWILLING TO DISCUSS "BILATERAL RELATIONS" BEFORE DIPLOMATIC TIES ARE ESTABLISHED. FRG HAS ARGUED, SO FAR TO NO AVAIL, THAT AN UNDERSTANDING ON THE BERLIN QUESTION IS NOT AN ASPECT OF ITS "BILATERAL RELATIONS" WITH NORTH VIETNAM OR ANY OTHER PARTICULAR COUNTRY BUT, RATHER, AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT OF BONN'S WHOLE APPROACH TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

2. BERENDONCK DOES NOT EXPECT ANY CHANGE IN THE NORTH VIETNAMESE POSITION UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE FRG'S DIFFERENCES WITH VARIOUS EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES OVER ITS RIGHT TO REPRESENT BERLIN ABROAD HAVE BEEN SETTLED. HE POINTS IN THIS CONNECTION TO THE PARTICULARLY WARM RELATIONS BETWEEN HANOI AND EAST BERLIN AND TO THE RESPECT WHICH NORTH VIETNAM'S LEADERSHIP HAS FOR THE GDR. BERENDONCK FOUND, DURING HIS VISIT TO HANOI LAST SPRING, THAT GDR REPRESENTATIVES IN THE NORTH VIETNAMESE CAPITAL ENJOYED SOMETHING OF A PREFERRED POSITION IN COMPARISON WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES FROM THE USSR AND PRC.

3. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE IMPASSE OVER BERLIN, THERE IS NO SENSE OF URGENCY HERE ABOUT ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH NORTH VIETNAM. THIS IS A SITUATION WHICH, BERENDONCK IMPLIED, IS NOT UNWELCOME TO HIS GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH THE FRG OF COURSE REMAINS UNHAPPY ABOUT THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE DELAY. ONE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS SITUATION IS THAT THE APPROXIMATELY FORTY MILLION MARKS WHICH THE FRG HAS ALLOCATED FOR ASSISTANCE TO NORTH VIETNAM REMAIN UNTOUCHED AND WILL SO REMAIN UNTIL RELATIONS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AND THE OPPORTUNITY CREATED TO DEVELOP APPROPRIATE PROJECTS. (THERE IS OF COURSE, A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PRIVATELY FUNDED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE GOING FROM THE FRG TO NORTH VIETNAM.)

4. COMMENT:

. SO LONG AS BERLIN CONTINUES TO BE THE MAIN POINT
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PAGE 03 BONN 17160 282306Z

OF DISAGREEMENT IN WEST GERMAN-NORTH VIETNAMESE DISCUSSIONS, THE TIMING OF ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS CANNOT BE PREDICTED WITH ANY CERTAINTY. AS INDICATED ABOVE, THE FONOFF DOES NOT SEEM TO BE PARTICULARLY UNHAPPY OVER THIS DELAY. THERE IS LITTLE PUBLIC PRESSURE FOR BONN TO FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS IN RECOGNIZING HANOI, AND FONOFF OFFICIALS ARE APPARENTLY RATHER GLAD

OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO WAIT AND SEE HOW THE SITUATION
IN INDO-CHINA DEVELOPS BEFORE TAKING THIS STEP.
HILLENBRAND

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